



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

November 6, 2006

**DEFENDANT SENTENCED FOR ROLE IN
EMBEZZLEMENT OF PAYROLL TAXES**

Tampa, FL - United States District Court Judge James D. Whittemore today sentenced ROBERT M. CRAWFORD, age 63, to a sentence of 42 months' imprisonment, to be followed by a term of 3 years of supervised release. He also imposed a fine of \$10,000. The defendant pled guilty on July 26, 2006 to one count of income tax evasion.

According to the facts in the plea agreement and testimony in court, CRAWFORD was an employee of Pay Plus Payroll Administrators, Inc. ("Pay Plus"), a company based in the Middle District of Florida. Pay Plus collected funds from its corporate clients and agreed to file payroll tax returns (Forms 941) with the Internal Revenue Service and pay to the IRS its clients' payroll taxes.

During the period between 1999 and 2003, CRAWFORD embezzled the funds of the company which he knew represented the payroll tax payments of Pay Plus' clients. He engineered a scheme through which Pay Plus issued corporate checks to Crawford and other businesses and individuals associated with him, collected those funds, but did not

turn them over to the IRS. During the tax year 2001, as a result of this scheme, he embezzled approximately \$456,707.80 in funds from Pay Plus. As a result, the defendant's actions represented an attempt to evade the collection and payment of said funds to the IRS. The total of payroll funds thus embezzled and diverted by the defendant between 1999 and 2003 was approximately \$1, 582,756.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay L. Hoffer of the Tampa Division.